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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

Written statement submitted by the Transnational Radical Party, a non-governmental organization in consultative status (category I)

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

[22 March 1996]

1. In the context of a positive evaluation of the international efforts for reaching a comprehensive peaceful agreement in the Balkan region and of the results obtained so far, the Transnational Radical Party encourages giving careful consideration also to the situation in Kosovo.

2. Recent reports by Amnesty International, Helsinki Watch and other international organizations point to continuing violations of human rights, in particular the rights of free speech and press, justice and personal safety, together with the right to education, work and housing.

3. In such circumstances, which have existed for several years, the Albanian population of Kosovo, in its stated intentions and in practice, has confined its action to non-violent methods of passive resistance and to establishing parallel political and cultural institutions, which are unofficial and unrecognized.

4. It is worth mentioning that new laws are constantly adopted by both the Serb and the Federal Parliaments to encourage the colonization of Kosovo, while new discriminatory laws will soon be adopted.

5. Examples of the current situation abound. Lots and new constructions are assigned and built in the most prominent localities. The Serbian colonizers are given preferential treatment while the Albanian emigrants are denied permanent return: the passports of the seasonal workers are confiscated and returned to their owners only against large sums of money (119 cases in 1995).

6. About 15,000 Serb refugees from Krajina, by means of promises and/or force, have been brought into Kosovo and are occupying schools (even the library of Pristina University), nursery schools, farms, hotels and private homes after forcefully evicting their rightful owners (53 families violently evicted by paramilitary groups). The purpose is to have 100,000 Serbs in Kosovo by 1998.

7. Since 1990, over 140,000 Albanians have been arbitrarily fired with the consequent loss of social assistance for themselves and their families. In 1995 alone, there were 328 more dismissals. Harassment in the work environment also involves companies that are penalized by taxes and forced to make contributions for the benefit of Serb refugees and have no choice other than to close down. This happens to marketplaces as well, where finance officers confiscate goods and money (more than 722 cases have been reported).

8. Not even schools have been spared this treatment. The police, in fact, have taken over buildings, confiscated educational material and beaten faculty members. Schooling of Albanian students has been conducted in private homes still not immune from police repression (over 130 schools occupied and more than 500 beatings reported).

9. Police destroyed properties and entire villages, which they raided under the pretext of searching for illegal arms and resistance movements and they also made unwarranted arrests for possession of Albanian literature and music (over 3,500 cases in 1994 alone). A number of Albanians died following torture and confrontation with the police force.

10. The courts are themselves an instrument of enforcement of this situation. They have sentenced over 300 people (mostly former policemen of Albanian nationality) for "crimes against the territorial integrity of the Yugoslav Federation" and many more are still detained in Federation prisons. The military tribunals have arrested over 100 people for desertion or resistance and more than 1,500 conscientious objectors are still awaiting trial.

11. There has been a large distribution of arms among the Serb population. Furthermore, even though many Albanians have been able to escape from the forced mobilization, many more have died under suspicious circumstances.

12. The risk of exasperation is evident: in other areas mediation and peaceful solutions are being sought. We believe that the question of Kosovo must be faced with similar goodwill, and that monitoring of the situation by international institutions (United Nations, European Union, Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe) should be restored.